

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An orthodontic bracket comprising:

a base firmly attachable directly or indirectly to teeth surfaces;

a bracket main body equipped on one side of the base;

an arch wire slot shaped as a groove along a mesiodistal direction in the bracket main body, operative to support an arch wire therein;

a substantially belt-like clip curved substantially in a U-shape to cover at least one part of the arch wire slot that opposes the base, the clip having a catching end portion, at an upper end part of the clip, operative to creep under a cover portion ~~supported by~~of the bracket main body, and a recess portion, at the upper end part of the clip, operative to catch a clip release tool for releasing the clip;

a guide portion formed in at least one of the bracket main body and the base, the guide portion provided along a tooth axial direction crossing with the arch wire slot, the guide portion operative to guide the clip; and

a middle groove, formed on the bracket main body at a middle area thereof along a direction perpendicular to the mesiodistal direction; and

a wall portion which extends upward from an edge of the middle groove and faces the cover portion.

2. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 1, wherein the recess portion is a concave portion which does not pass through the clip in a thickness direction.

3. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 1, wherein the recess portion is a cut-and-rising portion comprising a convex portion that protrudes from an outer surface of the clip in a direction facing away from the bracket main body.

4. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 3, wherein the convex portion is formed at an edge of the upper end part of the clip.

5. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 3, wherein the convex portion is formed at an end part of the clip.

6. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 5, wherein the convex portion is shaped substantially in a half-spherical dome.

7. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 5, wherein the convex portion has a cutout substantially in a V-shape at a flat end part thereof.

8. (currently amended) An orthodontic bracket comprising:

a base firmly attachable directly or indirectly to teeth surfaces;

a bracket main body equipped on one side of the base;

an arch wire slot shaped as a groove along a mesiodistal direction in the bracket main body, operative to support an arch wire therein;

a substantially belt-like clip curved substantially in a U-shape to cover at least one part of the arch wire slot that opposes the base, the clip having a catching end portion, at an upper end part of the clip, operative to creep under a cover portion of the bracket main body, and a catching cutout portion, in the upper end part of the clip, substantially in a V-shape for catching a clip release tool for releasing the clip;

a guide portion formed in at least one of the bracket main body and the base, the guide portion provided along a tooth axial direction crossing with the arch wire slot, the guide portion operative to guide the clip; and

a middle groove, formed on the bracket main body at a middle area thereof along a direction perpendicular to the mesiodistal direction; and

a wall portion which extends upward from an edge of the middle groove and faces the cover portion.

9. (currently amended) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 1, wherein the clip has a contacting portion ~~and the bracket main body has a receiving portion operative to contact to the contacting portion~~, and wherein when the clip is released from the bracket main

body, the contacting portion contacts to the ~~receiving-wall~~ portion, thereby regulating the ~~a~~ releasing position of the clip from the bracket main body.

10. (currently amended) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 8, wherein the clip has a contacting portion ~~and the bracket main body has a receiving portion operative to contact to the contacting portion~~, and wherein when the clip is released from the bracket main body, the contacting portion contacts to the ~~receiving-wall~~ portion, thereby regulating the ~~a~~ releasing position of the clip from the bracket main body.

11. (withdrawn) A clip release tool for releasing a clip from a bracket main body of an orthodontic bracket, the orthodontic bracket comprising a base firmly attachable directly or indirectly to teeth surfaces, a bracket main body equipped on one side of the base, an arch wire slot shaped in groove along mesiodistal direction in the bracket main body, enabling to support an arch wire therein, a substantially belt-like clip curved substantially in U-shape as covering at least one part of an opposite side to the base in the arch wire slot, the clip having a catching end portion for creeping under a cover portion supported by the bracket main body at an upper end part thereof and a recess portion or a substantially V-shaped catching cutout portion for catching a clip release tool for releasing the clip at the upper end part thereof, and a guide portion formed in at least one of the bracket main body and the base, and along a tooth axial direction crossing with the arch wire slot, enabling to guide the clip, the clip release tool comprising:

a first projection and a second projection which are arranged substantially in V-shape,

wherein the first projection enables to catch the recess portion or the substantially V-shaped catching cutout portion of the clip, and the second projection regulates the engagement of the first projection with the recess portion or the catching cutout portion, while pressing down the clip to prevent the clip from deformation of the clip.

12. (currently amended) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim ~~1~~2, where the cut-and-rising portion also comprises a concave portion connected to the convex portion.

13. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 1, wherein the cover portion does not cover the recess portion.

Claims 14 and 15 (canceled).

16. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 8, wherein the catching cutout portion extends from an edge of the upper end part of the clip.

17. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 1, where the clip does not come into contact with the bracket main body before moving the clip to a releasing position.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
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18. (previously presented) The orthodontic bracket as set forth in claim 8, where the clip does not come into contact with the bracket main body before moving the clip to a releasing position.